

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL POSS DUPE

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 NEA-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07

H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01

SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 IO-14 DRC-01 /146 W

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R 171600Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2370

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 13999

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR VT TS XF

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA'S PAPAL AUDIENCE

DEPT PLEASE PASS USINT CAIRO

1. VATICAN DESK OFFICER FOR MIDEAST WAS ABLE DEC 17 TO GIVE US BRIEF ACCOUNT OF PRES BOURGUIBA'S DEC 14 PRIVATE AUDIENCE WITH POPE PAUL. FONMIN MASMOUDI AND TUNISIAN AMB TO HOLY SEE BERGAOUI ACCOMPANIED BOURGUIBA AND VATICAN "FONMIN" ARCHBISHOP CASAROLI JOINED POPE. SOURCE CHARACTERIZED MEETING AS PRIMARILY COURTESY CALL AND "VERY GENERALIZED" TOUR D'HORIZON OF ME SITUATION. BOURGUIBA MADE NO REQUESTS OF NOR SUGGESTIONS TO POPE RE ANY ROLE HOLY SEE MIGHT PLAY IN SEARCH FOR PEACE OR FOR SOLUTION TO QUESTION OF JERUSALEM. NIMIERI-HIM VISIT WAS NOT DISCUSSED.

2. BOURGUIBA, ACCORDING TO SOURCE, MAINLY OUTLINED HOW HE VISUALIZED ME PEACE COULD DEVELOP -- FULL ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM ARAB TERRITORIES OCCUPIED DURING 1967 WAR IN EXCHANGE FOR ARAB RECOGNITION OF ISRAEL AND A PEACE TREATY. SOURCE SAID BOURGUIBA DID NOT ENTER INTO PARTICULARS CONCERNING FUTURE OF JERUSALEM.

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NITION OF ISRAEL AND A PEACE TREATY. SOURCE SAID BOURGUIBA DID NOT ENTER INTO PARTICULARS CONCERNING FUTURE OF JERUSALEM.

3. COMMENT: ARAB DIPLOMATS ACCREDITED TO HOLY SEE FREQUENTLY EXPRESS THEIR PUZZLEMENT THAT VATICAN NOT KNOWN TO BE PREPARING A DETAILED PLAN FOR JERUSALEM AND LIKewise THAT POPE NOT MORE ACTIVE IN PRESSING WHATEVER VIEWS HE MAY HAVE ON JERUSALEM. DESPITE THIS APPARENT ARAB CONCERN FOR PAPAL QUIESCENCE ON JERUSALEM WE UNDERSTAND FROM OUR VATICAN CONTACTS AS WELL AS FROM THE ARAB DIPLOMATS THEMSELVES THAT NO ARAB REP HERE HAS EVER TRIED TO STIMULATE VATICAN ACTIVISM RE JERUSALEM. RUMORS CIRCULATING ROME THIS WEEK ALLEGED THAT SOME LOCAL ARABS HAD URGED VATICAN TO INSIST ON HAVING A VOICE AT GENEVA TALKS. THESE RUMORS PROVED FALSE. AN EGYPTIAN DIPLOMAT ACCREDITED TO HOLY SEE TOLD US DEC 17 THAT IN HIS "PERSONAL VIEW" VATICAN HAD PLANTED THIS RUMOR IN EFFORT "TO STIMULATE AN INVITATION TO GENEVA." WHILE THEY MAY FEIGN PUZZLEMENT ABOUT VATICAN'S APPARENT PASSIVITY OVER JERUSALEM, IT NOT LIKELY THAT ARAB DIPLOMATS WOULD WISH TO ENCOURAGE VATICAN TO EXPRESS ITS VIEWS AT THIS INITIAL STAGE OF NEGOTIATING PROCESS, ESPECIALLY SINCE VATICAN WOULD OPPOSE EXCLUSIVELY ARAB CONTROL OF JERUSALEM. SHOULD IT BECOME APPARENT AS PEACE TALKS UNFOLD THAT ONLY FEASIBLE SOLUTION FOR JERUSALEM IS SOME FORM OF INTERNATIONALIZATION, THEN -- AND PROBABLY ONLY THEN -- WOULD ARABS ATTEMPT TO ENGAGE VATICAN IN GENEVA TALKS. VOLPE

NOTE BY OCT: NOT PASSED CAIRO.

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